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16 October 1968
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ADDRESS TO THE NATIONAL
WAR COLLEGE AND INDUSTRIAL
COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

Pages 12-19?

General Kelly, General Davis,

Gentlemen:

I do not propose today to dwell on the mission, functions, and organization of the Central Intelligence Agency, because I understand that these topics have already been covered for you in considerable detail.

Instead, I would like to show you national intelligence in action, serving the policy-maker in the course of a crisis. Then I will discuss the nature and scope of the information we furnish, and finally, take a look at the shape and extent of the threat we face in the world today, and the role of intelligence in coping with it.

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Approved For Release 2005/03/24 : CIA-RDP80M01066A001400310001-4

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I want to discuss briefly the nature of the information which the policy maker receives from the intelligence community.

First, to the greatest degree possible it is national intelligence--meaning that it represents the coordinated, agreed view of the entire intelligence community. This is a fairly straightforward process in the deliberate production of a National Intelligence Survey, for example, or the scheduled annual National Intelligence Estimate on the Soviet general purpose forces.

It is a straightforward process, but not always a simple one. These papers do not reach agreement by begging the question, weasel-wording, or reducing the conclusions to the common denominator of ready agreement. That would be a disservice to the consumer.

Given adequate time, however, the disagreements that can be resolved by convincing the other fellow are taken care of, the ones that cannot be resolved express the dissent in footnotes, and the end product is a useful paper in which all members of the intelligence community can concur.

We even have an effective procedure for reaching agreement at the close of business each day on the

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items to be treated in the Central Intelligence Bulletin, the principal vehicle for informing the policy maker on current intelligence. In this case, I should note, it is not always possible to keep the intelligence both current and national overnight. CIA assumes the responsibility unilaterally for keeping the publication up to date when coordination is manifestly impossible, although the Watch Committee or other coordinating groups may be called into session in the middle of the night if the occasion warrants it.

And then there is the critical item of warning intelligence that arrives in the middle of the night, obviously demanding urgent dissemination. As the President's principal intelligence officer, I have the primary responsibility to provide warning on critical developments affecting the national security. I prefer to deliver coordinated intelligence when possible, but the responsibility for the earliest possible warning is over-riding.

In addition to being national, the intelligence we deliver is all-source, and finished intelligence. The critical cable coming in hot from the field may be disseminated in its original form in recognition of its urgent importance, but if it is, it is followed as soon as possible by an evaluated treatment in which the intelligence community brings to bear not only relevant

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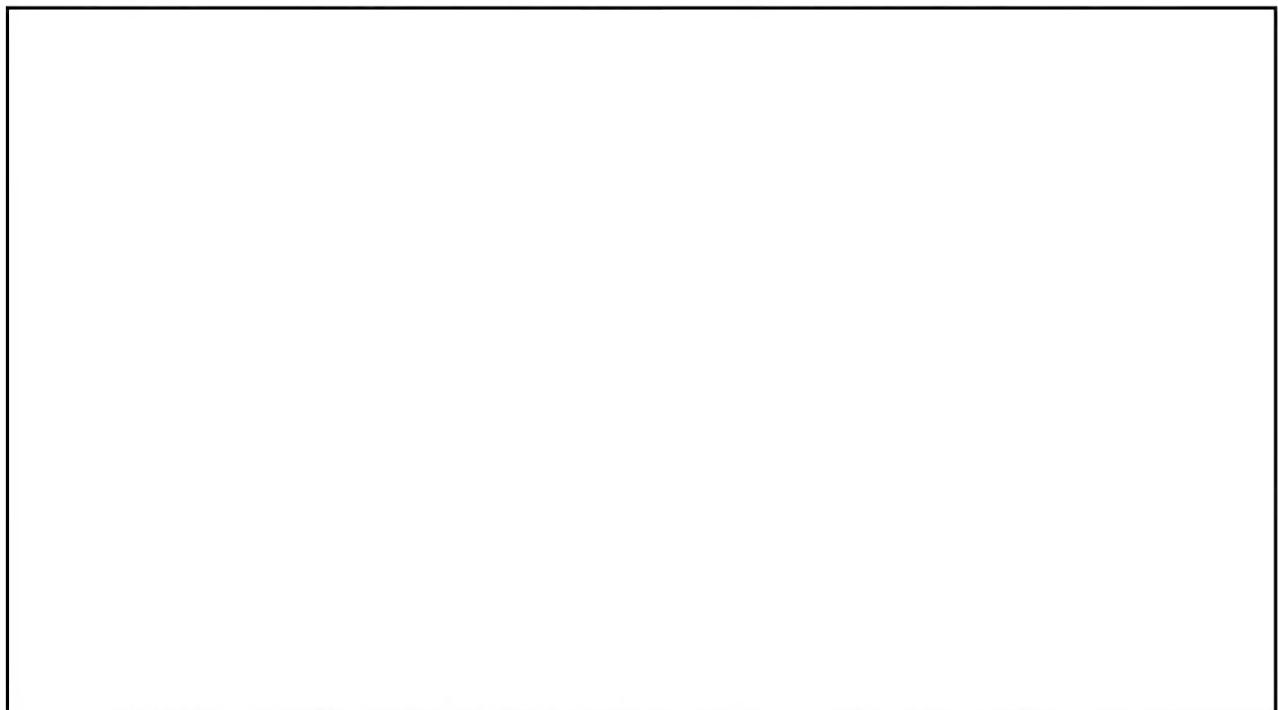
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information from other countries, other sources, even open sources, but the analysis made possible by the extensive background and depth of expertise available at headquarters.

And I should also note that the intelligence package available to the policy maker is comprehensive--basic, current, and estimative.

One of the underlying factors contributing to the successful intelligence treatment of the Arab-Israeli crisis during those four days in May, 1967, was the continuous, thorough spade-work the collectors and analysts of the community had been doing on the Arab-Israeli situation for a dozen years or more.

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Conceivably, the national security interests of the United States may become involved in critical situations

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in French Somaliland, Nepal, or Spitsbergen. The aim of basic intelligence is to collect and coordinate all possibly relevant information before the contingency is even predictable. The National Intelligence Survey program remains a step or two behind the growing number of the world's nations, but it is already a mass of information more than 10 times the volume of the Encyclopedia Britannica,

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Current intelligence has to operate on the all-source basis, 24 hours a day. The Operations Center in CIA, working with the Office of Current Intelligence, screens something more than 125 pieces of information every hour, around the clock and seven days a week. It follows not only the cables of CIA, State, and Defense, but the information gathered by NSA and FBIS, and the wire services of UPI, AP, and Reuters.

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The Operations Center in CIA is linked by every useful communications channel,

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with the Situation Room in the White House, the NMCC and DIA at the Pentagon, and the Operations Center at the Department of State. A CIA Watch Officer

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sits in at the NMCC 24 hours a day, and when a flap situation arises, we can provide the same type of staffing at the Department of State Operations Center.

Our Operations Center also maintains space for Task Forces which can be assigned on a 24-hour basis in critical situations, so that there will at all times be competent analysts available to read, evaluate and process the continuing flow of current intelligence. We have found that the one-man expertise from the country desk in Current Intelligence turns a bit bleary after the first 72 hours of a crisis, so we create a Task Force with branch chiefs, division chiefs, estimators, economists, men from the operational side of the agency, and are thus able to ride out the protracted crisis with fresh relays of men who know the country or area involved.

The final layer is the estimative intelligence. Estimating has been described as "what you do when you do not know." Seriously, no matter how successful intelligence may be, there will always be a point at which we run out of facts, and the policy maker still needs the best available judgment of what the situation is or what the course of developments is likely to be.

The estimative process begins with facts, and is built on facts. From this broad base, a pyramid is constructed by cautious projection, logic, deduction,

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and extrapolation. The resulting conclusions are not hard fact--at least, at the time they are not known to be fact--but the process is as vital and as legitimate as the diagnosis which a doctor makes from the symptoms before he operates.

The estimate is the closest approach of the intelligence community to a participation in policy formulation--particularly the contingency estimate, which seeks to answer the policy maker's question about the likely consequences of alternative U.S. courses of action. When we are asked: "What will China do if the United States does thus-and-so in Country X ?," it is pointless to disclaim an impact on policy decisions if we are forced to conclude that China, in response, will invade Country Y.

To preserve the usefulness of the estimate process, the intelligence community must at all times insure objectivity, and avoid advocacy. The estimates must have credibility. The intelligence community can afford to have them disregarded, but it cannot afford to have them disbelieved, or challenged on grounds that they are constructed to support a particular policy choice.

The strongest guarantee working for the intelligence community in this respect is its independence. The concept of the intelligence community, and the medium of national, agreed intelligence provide an atmosphere--an environment--in which the estimators can reach their

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conclusions unencumbered by the need to advance the objectives, defend the recommendations, or justify the budgetary requests of any particular department.

The more the intensity of a controversy brings out the Machiavelli in the individual representative of a department or agency, the more the collective, centripetal force of the coordinated approach keeps him honest as an integral part of the intelligence community.

As an example, take the question of the state of Russia's strategic defenses--particularly the so-called Tallinn system or SA-5. Is this an anti-ballistic missile system, or a long-range surface-to-air weapon for use against high-performance bombers and other aerodynamic vehicles?

The answer has considerable bearing on a wide range of problems and proposals concerned with the balance between East and West in strategic offense and strategic defense. It has direct impact, for instance, on whether and to what extent the United States should build an ABM defense, and whether a new advanced manned bomber is necessary.

These questions can be argued in the Executive Departments, in Congress, and, unfortunately, in great detail in public print, but the estimator must approach the nature of the SA-5 without regard for whether he favors or opposes the Sentinel program

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or an advanced manned strategic aircraft.

He must concern himself with, and confine himself to, the information we can obtain on the missile, the launch complex, the radars and other associated equipment, and the deployment of the Tallinn system itself. Until our knowledge on these matters is complete, there will be room for disagreement, and there will be legitimate channels for expressing that disagreement.

But for the sake of the estimate's credibility--

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--the footnote which dissents

from the conclusion on the nature and capability of the SA-5 system must be a matter of conviction, not commitment.

I have been talking about the principles governing intelligence support for the policy maker, and some past examples. I want to close with some general perspective on what the intelligence community is telling the policy makers today about our main concern, the Soviet and Chinese strategic threat to the United States.

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The intelligence community, created by the National Security Act of 1947, has just come of age, at 21. In life, this is a period when man takes a deep breath,

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looks around, and is suddenly overwhelmed by the realization that there are responsibilities and obligations which accompany the rights and privileges of maturity.

For the intelligence community, there is in information explosion which constantly threatens to bury the critical and the perceptive intelligence in the voluminous, the misleading, or the unreliable.

Yet it is all the more vital that we have the men, the methods--and even the automated machines--that can cut through this flood of paper and come up with the critical intelligence and judgment the policy makers need. The deadlines have gotten shorter, and the stakes have become deadlier. The breathing space has been narrowed to the time it takes a missile to go halfway around the world.

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